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2020-10-01

Paulsrud , B , Zilliacus , H & Ekberg , L 2020 , ' Spaces for multilingual education : Language orientations in the national curricula of Sweden and Finland ' , International Multilingual Research Journal , vol. 14 , no. 4 , pp. 304-318 . https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2020.1714158

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/319529
https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2020.1714158

International Multilingual Research Journal

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hmrj20

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To cite this article: BethAnne Paulsrud , Harriet Zilliacus & Lena Ekberg (2020) Spaces for multilingual education: language orientations in the national curricula of Sweden and Finland, International Multilingual Research Journal, 14:4, 304-318, DOI: 10.1080/19313152.2020.1714158

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2020.1714158

INTERNATIONAL MULTILINGUAL RESEARCH JOURNAL
2020, VOL. 14, NO. 4, 304–318
https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2020.1714158

Routledge
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Spaces for multilingual education: language orientations in the national curricula of Sweden and Finland

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ABSTRACT

Both Sweden and Finland have education systems promoting equity and equality. However, recent societal and political changes linked to increased immigration have created new challenges in efforts to support linguistic diversity. This paper aims to explore how multilingualism is represented in the national compulsory school curricula in the two contexts, using the language orientation framework: language as problem, right, or resource. The analysis reveals differences. In Finland, an explicit discourse on multilingual education exists, with an aim of integrating multilingual perspectives into the whole curriculum. In Sweden, however, the discourse is less explicit; and multilingualism as a concept is limited to minority language students. Considering language orientations in the two curricula affords an understanding of the spaces for multilingual education that are key to our possibilities as educators to promote linguistic diversity and social justice in the schools of today's global societies.

KEYWORDS

Multilingual education; language orientations; compulsory school; national curriculum; Sweden; Finland

Introduction

Compulsory schools in most contexts are usually organized as monolingual spaces (Piller, 2016), with the majority language the only legitimate language of learning (e.g., Rosén & Wedin, 2015). In the school, multilingualism may be "desirable but problematic" (Liddicoat, Heugh, Curnow, & Scarino, 2014, p. 271). However, a "multilingual turn" (Conteh & Meier, 2014) representing a greater focus on language and multilingualism in education is evident today, with an "increasing normalisation of multilingualism" (Turner & Cross, 2016, p. 289) in many contexts. There are calls for an examination of language in schools, in order to meet the needs of the "racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in local contexts worldwide" (Delavan, Valdez, & Freire, 2017, p. 86). This is reflected, for example, in policies presented by the Council of Europe (2014). Likewise, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states that language support for multilingual students is key to ensuring both school achievement and equity in society (Field, Kuczera, & Pont, 2007). As educational policy might perpetuate or resist systems of social inequality (Johnson, 2010), affording space for multilingualism in schools may be one way to support social justice, thus linking multilingual education to empowerment and access to democracy.

This study, which is part of a larger project on multilingual and multicultural education in policy and teacher education (see Paulsrud & Zilliacus, 2018; Zilliacus, Paulsrud, & Holm, 2017), aims to explore how multilingualism is represented in the national curricula in Sweden and Finland, with particular attention on how curricula create spaces to promote linguistic diversity and social justice. Multilingualism is visible and formally recognized in each country, with official responses to multilingualism at the national level. In Sweden, the Language Act (2009) promotes and protects Swedish as well as the "language diversity in Sweden" (Section 2), and stipulates that those with a mother tongue other than Swedish "are to be given the opportunity to develop and use their mother tongue" (Section

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14). This applies to both official minority languages, e.g., Meänkieli and Sami, and so-called immigrant languages, e.g., Arabic. Similarly, the Constitution of Finland (1999, Section 17) articulates "the right to one's language and culture". The primary focus in Finland is on the national languages Finnish and Swedish, with other groups, such as the Sami (an indigenous people) and the Romany Chib, guaranteed the right to maintain and support their own language and culture. Both countries also recognize and support sign languages through official measures. However, a question is how these official endorsements of multilingualism are reflected in compulsory education in these two countries.

Some differences between the linguistic contexts are worth noting in order to understand education policy in the two countries. Table 1 summarizes some relevant statistics on the two countries (Official Statistics of Finland, 2019; Statistics Sweden, 2019).

Sweden has only one "principal" language: the majority language Swedish (Language Act, 2009). According to official figures (Statistics Sweden, 2019), over 19% of the Swedish population is comprised of immigrants, although there are no exact statistics on which languages other than Swedish are used, as the Swedish Personal Data Act (1998) prohibits the collection of statistics which may reveal ethnic background (see also Ekberg, 2017). Estimates, however, indicate that approximately 150–200 languages are spoken as a mother tongue, with Arabic and Finnish two of the most common (Parkvall, 2015). Finland, on the other hand, is officially a bilingual country, with both Finnish and Swedish designated as "national" languages. The majority of Finns have Finnish as their mother tongue while approximately 5% have Swedish. Official statistics show that 373,325 persons speaking a foreign language as their native language were living permanently in Finland at the end of 2017, with the biggest groups comprising speakers of Russian, Estonian, and Arabic (Official Statistics of Finland, 2019).

The two countries present some variation regarding both institutional frameworks and practices concerning education and language as well. Each country has obligatory instruction in the principal/national languages, but also offers formal language support in minority languages. Nonetheless, while Finland has officially been a bilingual country since 1922, with long experience in providing both Finnish- and Swedish-medium education, Sweden has more extensive teaching experience in both Swedish as a second language and mother tongue instruction in minority languages for multilingual students (see, e.g., Reath Warren, 2017). However, although Swedish as a second language has existed as its own subject since 1995 in Sweden, problems with implementation and low status have persisted (Lindberg, 2007). Additionally, Swedish students have a right to language and study support in their mother tongues other than Swedish (e.g., Arabic or Polish), whereas Finnish schools may offer this but are not obliged to do so. However, even with differences, Sweden and Finland exhibit similarities in educational policies and values, as part of the Nordic model of curriculum-making with a focus on social justice, equality and equity (Imsen, Blossing, & Moos, 2016). This model prevails, despite neo-liberal reasoning gaining pace since the 1990's in both countries (Isopahkala-Bouret, Lappalainen, & Lahelma, 2014).

Recently, both Sweden and Finland have been placed at the crossroads in realizing the aims of social justice and equality in education due to societal change and political developments, including increased immigration and, subsequently, increased cultural and linguistic diversity in the compulsory school. Changes to both linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe, such as the increased flow of refugees to Sweden and Finland, have created what Liddicoat, et al., call "a sense of urgency/ … /for planning for

Table 1. An overview of Sweden and Finland.

	Sweden	Finland
Population 2018	10,230,185	5,517,919
Immigration statistics (born abroad) 2018	1,955,569 (19.1%)	402,619 (7.3%)
Main language/s	Swedish (≈ 8,000,000)	Finnish (4,835,778) Swedish (288,400)
Other languages	≈150–200 languages spoken as a mother tongue	159 languages spoken as a mother tongue

some form of productive coexistence of different linguistic and cultural groups" (2014, p. 269). Previously the migration was from a limited number of countries close by, whereas now migration is from more varied countries resulting in more linguistic diversity. Municipalities in both Sweden and Finland are also obligated to provide education for all children, regardless of their residency status (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018; Norberg Brorsson & Lainio, 2015). Immigration is on a much lower scale in Finland, although in Helsinki city, the number of students with a mother tongue other than Finnish or Swedish is estimated to exceed 20% by 2020 (Säävälä, 2012). Growing linguistic diversity creates new demands on education in both countries.

In light of the considerations presented above, the present study explores the current Swedish and Finnish national school curricula, aiming to clarify the conceptual framework of multilingual education in these policy documents. In particular, the focus is on examining the discourse on linguistic diversity through the lens of Ruiz's three language orientations (1984): language as problem, right, or resource. In the words of Hult and Hornberger (2016, p. 31), we intend to "unpack and reflect upon the ideas aligned with each orientation" in the directives evident in the policy related to multilingualism in the compulsory school, to thus better understand the spaces for linguistic diversity and social justice in the curricula.

A framework of language orientations

Already in the 1980's, Ruiz presented three orientations toward language planning: language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource (Ruiz, 1984; see also Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 33, for an overview). By *orientation*, Ruiz aimed to describe "a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society" (p. 16). Hornberger (1990, p. 24) summarizes them:

> Under a language-as-problem orientation, language is seen as an obstacle standing in the way of the incorporation of members of linguistic minorities into the mainstream. Under a language-as-right orientation, the right of linguistic-minority members to speak and maintain their mother tongue is defined as a human and civil right. Under a language-as-resource orientation, the importance to the nation of conserving and developing all of its linguistic resources is emphasized.

These orientations, which Ruiz (1984) likens to what may be considered legitimate attitudes toward language in a context, are not always explicitly evident in approaches to language, but may be uncovered through policy analysis. We explore each orientation further below, especially as they associate with education.

The first orientation, *language-as-problem*, involves not only how to use language but also how to both ensure language use for all and address problems associated with languages, like poverty or lack of social mobility. As Ruiz emphasizes, "language problems are never merely language problems" (1984, p. 21), but rather social problems demanding attention. The focus on the language-as-problem orientation is not on promoting linguistic diversity but rather on maintaining unity through the development of the national or majority language (Ruiz, 2010, p. 166). In an educational context, this may translate into "the idea of compensating for a linguistic deficit by focusing on assimilation and transition to a dominant majority language" (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 35). According to de Jong (2016, p. 278), focus on the official majority school language for teaching and learning is an "assimilationist-oriented language-in-education" policy, one in which "students' native languages may be tolerated, but not with the intent to develop or maintain [their own] language and develop advanced bilingual skills". Instead, minority languages may be perceived to impede students' development and access to knowledge, and these languages are not legitimized in the school context (Johnson, Avineri, & Johnson, 2017; also Liddicoat et al., 2014). In general, those who view language as a problem do not support linguistic diversity but rather cling to a deficit perspective (see, e.g., Delavan et al., 2017). Thus, in schools with a monolingual orientation, all students with a minority language will be considered problematic "because they come to school already lacking" (Rolstad, 2014, p. 2). Questions emerging from this orientation may include

which languages are considered problems as well as why and for whom, what hierarchies are in place, and what challenges are created for minority speakers (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 35).

The second orientation, *language-as-right*, refers to the basic human right of language, and is linked to issues of democracy and equal access to education (de Jong, 2016). The language-as-right orientation focuses on both the right to avoid discrimination for language use and the right to use one's own language to access democracy. Unlike the language-as-problem orientation, this orientation "seeks to address linguistically-based inequities using compensatory legal mechanisms" (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 35) and may concern legislation on language use or access. Linguistic rights may be on an individual level or group level, which can be related to *tolerance-oriented rights* and *promotion-orientated rights* (May, 2015). Individual language rights may be tolerated when, for example, individuals are allowed to preserve and use their own languages privately, such as within the family or peer group. Group rights may be promoted if, for example, they are entitled to use their language in official circumstances, such as in court or in education. Recognizing the linguistic human right to education through the medium of the mother tongue is to also recognize that "the mother tongue is a good thing in itself" (Ruiz, 2010, p. 165). Ruiz furthermore states, "unless one sees a language as a good thing in itself [as a resource], it is impossible to affirm anyone's right to it" (2010, p. 165), acknowledging the connection to the next orientation: *language-as-resource*.

In this third orientation, an affirmative view proposes that language resources that are actively developed allow for "language minority communities [to be seen] as important sources of expertise" (Ruiz, 1984, p. 28). Skills in minority languages are simultaneously seen as a personal and a societal resource. Rather than a threat to national unity, multilingualism is both valued and supported as part of a pluralistic society. However, both Ruiz (1984) and Hult and Hornberger (2016) point out the risk of foregrounding the interests of the society before the minorities' need and interests. Applied to educational policy, *language-as-resource* is the reverse view on multilingualism compared to the deficit perspectives inherent in the language-as-problem orientation. Regarding language as a resource has in recent years become prominent in critical approaches to research in multilingual classrooms (e.g., Conteh & Meier, 2014), with students' linguistic repertoires seen as essential to learning and with education programs supporting additional languages (Hult & Hornberger, 2016).

The study

This study presents an analysis of the conceptual framework of multilingual education in the current Swedish and Finnish national school curricula, utilizing Ruiz's three language orientations (1984). We incorporate a critical multilingual education approach, which includes a focus on social justice issues (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Panda, & Mohanty, 2009). Thus, the analysis focuses not only how language is represented in the curricula, but also on how the conceptual frameworks concerning multilingualism relate to the development of social justice aspects in education. By exploring Ruiz' three language orientations, we aim to illuminate these spaces created in the curricula for educators to promote linguistic diversity and social justice.

The material investigated includes the Swedish Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the recreation center (2015) and the Finnish National Core Curriculum (2014), as well as some supporting documents from each country. The two national curricula are each comprised of the following: a general introduction describing the fundamental values, the overall goals and guidelines for the education, and the syllabi with the teaching objectives and core content for each subject. The 2015 Swedish curriculum comprises 83,465 words, while the Finnish 2014 curriculum has 216,219 words. We analyzed the curricula in the research software Atlas.ti, first with a search for relevant key terms concerning discourses on multilingual and multicultural education. In a recursive process, we identified and tracked 55 key concepts that may be included in the discourses, such as *multiliteracy, diversity* and *bilingual*. The next stage of analysis involved a deeper reading, moving beyond the semantic level to focus on the contextual meanings in the policy texts and more specifically on concepts related to linguistic diversity. In particular, using Ruiz's 1984 language orientations, our analysis explored how the texts offer

space for multilingualism, possibly providing policies that resist the perpetuation of systems of social inequality (Johnson, 2010). We compared the themes within these orientations that emerged from each context, thus identifying similarities and differences between the curricular discourses.

We present the analysis of the curricular texts in two parts: first, a brief review of the word frequency of some key concepts and their situated meanings, and second, an investigation of language orientations represented in the curricula and some supporting documents.

Language concepts in the curricula

We identified key concepts potentially related to multilingualism in the curricula and compared them to occurrences in the most recent curricula prior to the current one for each country (Swedish National Agency for Education, 1994, for Sweden, and Finnish National Core Curriculum, 2004, for Finland), as our interest includes how the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in each may be reflected in curricular changes. This analysis revealed striking dissimilarities. The word frequency results of the key concepts *multilingual, bilingual* and *multiliteracy* in the two current national curricula illustrate this. Table 2 presents these results from the two current national curricula, as well as the previous curricula for each country to offer an indication of the development. (Note that the italicized terms show the original Swedish language, as each text was analyzed in the original Swedish language version. Note also the difference in the length of the texts.) Approximately 50 terms related to language and culture were considered; here we focus on the key concepts.

While the term *multilingual* in any form is not present in the 1994 Swedish curriculum, it appears five times in the revised 2015 version. All five instances of this term are found in the syllabi for Mother tongue tuition (MTT) and minority languages (Finnish, Romany Chib, Yiddish, and Meänkieli), as instruction should help students "become multilingual" (MTT, p. 71). Similarly, in the 1994 curriculum the concept *bilingual* was limited to students using Swedish Sign Language or studying MTT (two instances). Thus, *multilingualism* is reserved for those identified as having Swedish as a second language. There is no explicit reference to students being multilingual already when they arrive in the classroom. Nor is there any reference to students who are not in MTT or minority language instruction as being multilingual.

In the Finnish curriculum, signs of increasing emphasis on language and linguistic and cultural diversity are evident in the frequent use of terms such as *multilingual*,[1] *cultural diversity, multicultural*, and *multiliteracy*. In the 2014 curriculum, *multilingualism* emerges as a new key term with 105 instances and assumes an important role in the principles that guide the development of the school culture. The term somewhat overrides the term *bilingualism*, which has traditionally had a visible place in the Finnish curriculum as Finland is a bilingual nation. The current curriculum often emphasizes students' *multilingual identities*, which includes all students in the school, not only minority students. The school community is also at the outset defined as a *multilingual*. Students' linguistic and multilingual identities are frequently articulated side by side with cultural and

Table 2. Concepts related to multilingualism in the national curricula (number of instances).

Concept	Sweden 1994 (60,221)	Sweden 2015 (83,465 words)	Finland 2004 (68,394 words)	Finland 2014 (216,219 words)
Multilingual *flerspråkig*	0	5	9	105
Bilingual *tvåspråkig*	6	0	25	17
Language *språk*	200	953	1280	3714
Multiliteracy *multilitteracitet*	0	0	0	58

[1]The official term used in the curriculum is "monikielinen" (in Finnish) and "flerspråkig" (in Swedish). In the English translation both "plurilingual" and "multilingual" are used. "Plurilingual" generally refers to the language proficiency of the individual, whereas "multilingual" may refer both to the language capacity of the individual and the community.

multicultural identity (53 instances), which indicates that these concepts are closely intertwined. Specifically, multilingualism is "one manifestation of cultural diversity" (p. 29). In addition, the concept of multilingualism is linked to another new term, *multiliteracy* (58 instances), which is one of the seven transversal competencies that are aimed for throughout the curriculum and largely representing 21st century skills (Zilliacus, Holm, & Sahlström, 2017). *Multiliteracy* is defined as the ability to produce and work with different kinds of texts in various media and environments, and is connected to a widened approach to language learning and promotes multilingualism (p. 21). In contrast, the current Swedish curriculum does not feature multiliteracy at all.

Language orientations in the two contexts

In this section, we move beyond identifying explicit references to multilingualism in the curricula to an exploration of the language orientations revealed in the policy, as revealed through the use of language concepts in the two countries' curricula. Here we find striking differences, but also similarities, in the explicit and implicit ways that multilingualism is afforded space.

Language-as-problem

Neither the Swedish nor the Finnish curriculum explicitly state that multilingualism is a problem. However, having one mother tongue is generally seen as the norm in both Sweden and Finland. For example, Finnish parents are only able to indicate one mother tongue for their children on official forms, regardless of whether the children actually have more than one named language in their repertoires. Likewise, the Swedish Education Ordinance (2011: 185, Chapter 5, Section 8) specifies that Mother tongue tuition "may not include more than one language for a student" (although some concession is allowed for immigrated Romany Chib-speaking students to claim two mother tongues for unspecified "special reasons"). Beyond this monolingual orientation, the analysis of the two curricula reveals relevant issues of the language-as-problem orientation, such as majority language value and language hierarchies.

Finland, as an officially bilingual nation, offers compulsory school education in both Finnish and Swedish. However, the Finnish Basic Education Act (628/1998) stipulates arranging the two language groups separately, meaning on physically separate premises. Consequently, the result tends to be parallel monolingualism, with languages kept apart, rather than functional bilingualism, eliciting criticism of how bilingualism is actually supported (From & Sahlström, 2016). Hence, the Finnish bilingual school system stands out as a monolingual way of perceiving multilingualism (Rosén & Wedin, 2015). This system exemplifies the tensions between supporting multilingualism and the fear of endangering national languages (Salo, 2012). For example, in Swedish-speaking schools, securing and protecting the Swedish minority language and culture is considered vital, and is linked to giving limited space for the majority language, Finnish. In Finland, the Swedish language is articulated to have "core cultural tasks" in the Swedish-speaking schools as a means of supporting the minority culture, (p. 178). Consequently, we can see how Swedish-speaking schools often seek to be monolingual spaces, where the presence of Finnish is seen as a problem.

Another part of the Finnish education, which commonly reflects a problem-oriented approach to language concerns the education in Swedish for Finnish-speaking students as a mandatory subject in the curriculum. Swedish education has been subject to longstanding critique in Finland, which argues for the negative right *not* to study Swedish. This represents an ongoing and often heated debate in Finnish media and political discourse (Salo, 2012). The opposition to Swedish language learning appears largely as a problem-oriented perspective on language and the promotion of bilingualism in society. The debate has prevailed to this date: In 2018, the Finnish government introduced an experiment of giving a limited number of students the option to choose another language than Swedish, such as for instance Russian. This experiment challenged the current Education Act and language legislation on the support of official bilingualism of Finland. To the surprise of the government, though, the interest for other language

options has been minimal in schools, and very few students have seized this opportunity to study languages other than Swedish (Yle, 2018). However, the debate concerning students' freedom to choose any language they wish, and not be limited to learning the second national language, continues and highlights the question whether bi- and multilingualism should be supported in the society through mandatory or non-mandatory measures.

In the Swedish curriculum, as seen in the section above, multilingualism as a concept is limited to minority language students. Swedish as a second language gained recognition as a separate subject in 1995; and the current syllabus for Swedish as a second language is more similar to the syllabus for Swedish language as a subject than in previous curricula, with a diminished second language perspective. However, the Swedish as a second language syllabus still focuses more on form and less on aspects of language study like historical perspectives on language (see Norberg Brorsson & Lainio, 2015). This indicates that students studying Swedish as a second language have a deficit that needs compensating. Thus, second-language speakers may still be supposed deviant from the norm, as also seen in Siekkinen's (2017) study of supporting policy documents for the subjects of Swedish and Swedish as a second language.

Articulations of language hierarchies are evident in both curricula. In the Swedish curriculum, there are 16 "Goals of knowledge" in the introductory section that present an implicit language hierarchy in which students' mother tongues (other than Swedish) are not explicitly supported (pp. 13–14). These goals cover the entire curriculum, and not only language goals. The first goal of all compulsory schooling in Sweden is for the student to be able to "use the Swedish language, both in speech and writing, in a rich and varied way". Previous research on the monolingual orientation in Swedish schools has suggested that students are thus expected to both gain and use Swedish upon entering the school (Björk-Willén, Gruber, & Puskás, 2013). The second goal focuses on English, as students should "communicate in English, both in the spoken and written language". Only after the goal for English, does the Swedish curriculum include proficiency in or knowledge about foreign languages (part of goal 2) and then other Nordic languages (goal 8). Goal 9 specifies "knowledge about the cultures, languages, religion and history of the national minorities". As Piller states, locating diversity on the "lower rungs of the pyramid" maintains linguistic hierarchies (2016, p. 18). While a command of Swedish is indeed necessary "to fulfil linguistic needs for [students'] private and working life in Sweden and to take an active part in democratic society" (Lindberg, 2007, p. 73), the curriculum focuses only on the need for Swedish for participation in democracy – not on official minority languages nor on other languages spoken by students (see also Siekkinen, 2017).

In the Finnish curriculum, the two national languages stand out hierarchically as instruction is stated in the Basic Education Act (628/1998) to be principally organized in either Finnish or Swedish. In the curriculum, one of the national languages is also required as part of the students' language syllabus. However, instruction may also be organized in Sami, Romany Chib, and sign language. The fact that these languages are given equivalent space to the national languages as mother tongue options in the curriculum creates more equality at least on a documental level. In Finland, as evident in the Swedish curriculum above, English in education also maintains a high status, as students normally study two foreign languages, of which English is by far the most common (Kumpulainen, 2014). Generally, in a Nordic context, English is seen as a threat to the majority language rather than the linguistic diversity per se. English is often seen as a second language as well (Hult, 2012). In Sweden, however, the threat from English has indirectly triggered the political foregrounding of Swedish as the principal language in important domains of the society – at the cost of the visibility of immigrant languages, especially (Ekberg, 2013).

Language-as-right

The importance of linguistic rights is evident in the inclusion of minority language syllabi in each of the national curricula, indicating promotion-orientated rights. Each of the Swedish syllabi for minority languages calls for students to "develop their multilingualism" (p. 126), which may be related to

maintaining one's right to use a language. Likewise, an explicit aim for the minority language students as well as students from bilingual backgrounds is a high-level bilingualism in the Finnish curriculum. Thus, in both contexts, students have official support for their linguistic diversity in education, suggesting a recognition of the mother tongue as "good" (see Ruiz, 2010, p. 165).

The Finnish curriculum includes a distinct discourse on the positive right of each student to receive language support in the regular class or through separate tuition, as all tuition should consider the child's language abilities. Opportunities to develop language proficiency in the language of tuition as well as the home language are to be given:

> The student's cultural background and linguistic capabilities are taken into account in basic education. Each student's linguistic and cultural identity is supported in a versatile manner. The students are guided to know about, understand and respect each citizen's right to their own language and culture protected under the Constitution. (p. 90, Special questions of language and culture)

In the Finnish curriculum, the minority languages, including Sami languages, Romany Chib, and Finnish Sign Language, have historically been neglected, but have gained more recognition in the past decades (Zilliacus, Holm & Sahlström, 2017). The mother tongue options in Finland include eleven separate syllabi, including Finnish, Swedish, and the minority languages Sami, Romany Chib, and Finnish Sign Language. Additionally, there are syllabi for these languages as a second language for students and a general syllabus for students with mother tongues other than the national and official minority languages. The position of minority languages in the Finnish curriculum is also visible in all forms of Mother tongue and literature education as "The significance of minority languages and endangered languages is also discussed in teaching and learning" (p. 109). Moreover, the Finnish syllabi in Sami language and literature and Romany Chib language and literature emphasize the specific task to support the preservation of these languages spoken in Finland and to strengthen their status among other languages.

Mother tongue instruction in the Swedish curriculum was afforded its own syllabus in 2011, introducing language much like the syllabi for Swedish and Swedish as a second language and making "the mother tongue one language among many" (Norberg Brorsson & Lainio, 2015, p. 69). The Swedish curriculum also includes separate syllabi for four official minority languages (Finnish, Meänkieli, Yiddish, and Romany Chib) as both a first and second language. Until 2017, there was an entire curriculum for Sami education in Sweden, but the revised compulsory school curriculum for the school year 2018/2019 now includes a separate syllabus for the Sami language. The Swedish Language Act (2009) states the responsibility of the authorities to ensure individuals' access to language, but legally it does not state individuals' right to language. As argued in Ekberg (2017), the Language Act creates a discourse of linguistic rights, although the "rights" are merely statements of an official language policy. Ekberg concludes that it is no doubt counterintuitive for laypersons that the authorities' responsibility to give individuals access to language does not entail the individual's right to access to language. Thus, although the Swedish Language Act (2009) supports the development and use of one's own mother tongue, proficiency in or knowledge about the languages some students bring to the classroom with them (e.g. their mother tongues in languages other than Swedish or official minority languages) are not goals of the Swedish curriculum.

The provision of Swedish as a second language in the Swedish curriculum, with its own syllabus, may be seen as a a language-as-right orientation, as the subject promotes maintenance of access to the majority language. Likewise, in the curriculum, many content syllabi have learning goals that require a solid command of Swedish. Thus students must be given the right to learn and know the majority language, Swedish, in order to manage their education. However, a strong focus on (fast) acquisition of Swedish may put the importance of maintaining other mother tongues in the background (Ekberg, 2017). Hence, to what degree the provision of Swedish as a second language can be regarded as a manifestation of the language-as-right orientation is dependent on the authorities' simultaneous efforts to support mother tongue tuition.

As seen in this section, both the Finnish 2014 curriculum and the Swedish 2015 curriculum include separate Mother tongue syllabi for minority languages, which all follow the same syllabi structure as for the majority languages. The wide range of mother tongue education offered may illustrate the importance of language rights. However, a concern is the provision of home language education in Finland, called mother tongue tuition in Sweden. The Basic Education Act (628/1998), which is fundamental to the curriculum in Finland, allows the local educational provider to decide how the education in minority languages is organized. Finnish schools are not obliged to provide it. There is also debate on whether Russian should be included as a minority language considering that it is the second largest language minority group in Finland (Lähteenmäki & Pöyhönen, 2015). A minimum of four students is generally required for the provision of Sami and Romany Chib education in Finland; and, similarly, in Sweden the requirement extends to five students plus a "suitable" teacher (Swedish Education Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 10). These demands restrict the availability of minority language education in practice and potentially limit students' multilingualism (see also Hult & Hornberger, 2016). Additionally, although around 150 languages are offered as home language education in Finnish schools, the education is not equally offered in different parts of Finland, and teachers need more training to ensure the quality of the education (Harju-Luukkainen, Kuukka, Paavola, & Tarnanen, 2015) – problems experienced in Sweden as well. Consequently, linguistic equality and the support of multilingualism have limitations in practice.

The language-as-right orientation also focuses on the right to both avoid discrimination for language use and to use one's own language to access democracy. There is a clear focus on human rights and democracy in both national curricula. For example, in the Swedish curriculum, as part of a democratic perspective, the aim of education is to "promote the development and learning of all students […], respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based [… and], the equal value of all people" (p. 7). However, in the Swedish curriculum, the role of the student's own linguistic rights in democracy issues is not explicit, although there are references which may support this, such as minority language instruction as a means to "strengthen the possibilities to participate in society in Sweden and other countries" (p. 110).

The Finnish curriculum, on the other hand, is intertextually linked to a number of international treaties that underlie linguistic rights, importantly the UN declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), which provide fundamental baselines for the document. The child's right to his or her language is emphasized as a constitutional right, and, in the case of Sami students, in the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (2007). The description of the school community stipulates, "the community recognises the right to one's own language and culture as a fundamental right" (p. 29). Referring to the Constitution of Finland and the Non-discrimination Act (21/2004), the curriculum also specifies a legal obligation against language discrimination. A similar clear statement against language discrimination cannot be seen in the Swedish curriculum; although discrimination according to "gender, ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief system, transgender identity or its expression, sexual orientation, age or functional impairment or other degrading treatment" (p. 9) is expressly prohibited, linguistic discrimination is not explicitly addressed.

Language-as-resource

A language-as-resource orientation conveys the importance of utilizing all linguistic repertoires for learning. Language is an explicitly articulated resource in the Finnish curriculum. Language is key to all learning and students are to understand "the central meaning language has for learning, for communication, and for cooperation as well as for identity development and integration into society" (p. 29). The importance of language is also highlighted throughout the Swedish curriculum, as seen in the introduction to the language subject syllabi for Swedish and Swedish as a second language (p. 223):

> Language is the primary tool human beings use for thinking, communicating and learning. Through language people develop their identity, express their feelings and thoughts, and understand how others feel and think. Rich and varied language is important in being able to understand and function in a society where different cultures, outlooks on life, generations and language all interact.

Conversely, it is worth noting that language in Swedish – *språk* - may be either singular or plural with the same spelling, which applies to the original Swedish versions of both the Swedish and Finnish curriculum. The official English translation of this excerpt above from the Swedish curriculum is in singular, which may simply be a generic reference to language. However, if *language* refers instead to only Swedish, this may be a reinforcement of the monolingual orientation seen elsewhere in the Swedish curriculum. On closer inspection of the approximately 900 instances of *language* throughout the Swedish curriculum, it is clear that only a handful of these refers to language in a generic or plural sense. In all other cases, *language* refers to Swedish, English or a language other than English taught as a foreign language (called "modern language" in the Swedish curriculum). Besides that, *the Nordic languages* and *the national minority languages* are mentioned in the language subject syllabus for Swedish, since acquaintance with these languages are among the many goals of Swedish. Thus, despite the prevalence of *language* across the curriculum, the usage of this concept does not include references to individual or societal multilingualism, but rather presents a monolingual norm of Swedish, with other languages as foreign.

The "increasing normalisation of multilingualism" (Turner & Cross, 2016, p. 289), noted earlier in our introduction, is not clearly pronounced in the Swedish curriculum. In the curriculum, minority languages are not described as a resource for the individual student's learning nor as a resource for society at large. Instead, the expectation is that every student knows or will soon know Swedish (Ekberg, 2017), as also seen in the language-oriented goals mentioned above. Languages are seen as separate and, as previously indicated, only Swedish is seen as key to learning and full democratic participation in society – one goal of education (p. 13). The Goals of knowledge do not acknowledge students' own languages as an explicit resource. The Mother tongue tuition syllabus, though, does acknowledge the potential role that the language may play in learning: "Access to one's mother tongue facilitates language development and learning in different fields" (p. 71). In addition, there is a recognition of the potential extrinsic value of minority languages, as the MTT syllabi state:

> The position of the national minority language in Sweden is in great need of strengthening. To ensure the future of the languages in the country it is necessary that more people develop language skills. (Yiddish as a mother tongue, p. 94)

However, in the Swedish curriculum, Mother tongue tuition offers students "the conditions to develop their cultural identity and become multilingual" (MTT, p. 71). This may indicate that the students are at a disadvantage, needing assistance to "*become* multilingual" (our emphasis). They are not necessarily seen as already having this linguistic resource nor as offering this resource to society.

The Finnish curriculum, in contrast to the Swedish, maintains a fundamental starting point that "students are guided to see cultural and linguistic diversity fundamentally as a positive resource" (p. 22). Seeing multilingualism as a resource in the individual and the school community is frequently expressed as a normative statement, which is clearly visible in the general section that states, "languages are to be valued" (p. 29). Language proficiency objectives include the aim of multilingualism and multiliteracy. The school as a learning space is seen as a language learning community where all teachers serve as linguistic models and language teachers in the disciplines they teach. A "language-aware school" (p. 29) is set as a goal, where cultural and linguistic diversity is seen as an asset. Instruction in Sami, Romany Chib, and Finnish Sign Language aims to support the speakers' bi- and multilingual identities and awareness of their cultures and communities. Multilingualism appears as a resource for linguistic minority students, with multiple benefits linked to identity development, linguistic and multiliteracy skills, and linguistic awareness.

The Finnish curriculum strongly promotes linguistic interaction, and "parallel use of various languages in the school's daily life is seen as natural, and languages are appreciated" (p. 29). The

Swedish curriculum also stipulates that teaching should be adapted to each student's "background, earlier experience, language and knowledge" (p. 8). In the Finnish curriculum, however, this call is more explicit as students' different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are to be drawn upon in instruction, and the significance of the minority and endangered languages is to be discussed. Within the section on special questions on language and culture, "the objective is to guide students to appreciate different languages and cultures and promote bilingualism and plurilingualism" (p. 90). Finnish students are to develop into versatile and skillful users of language, and schoolwork may include multilingual teaching where the teachers and students use all the languages they know:

> Teaching and learning support the plurilingualism of students by utilising all languages, including those used by students in their leisure time. Teaching and learning also strengthen the students' trust in their own language learning abilities and in using their language skills confidently, even when they are limited (Mother tongue and literature, p. 110).

As Mustaparta, Nissilä, and Harmanen (2015) and Zilliacus, Holm and Sahlström (2017) argue, we can see a clear development during the past decades in language education policies in Finland. For instance, the curriculum of 1985 does not even mention multilingual competency, and the concept has a marginal role in the curriculum of 2004. Today, however, this competency represents a key curricular discourse. Seeing language learning as fundamental to all learning and creating an equal discourse among different languages in the school signifies a gradual shift in policy discourse, which is linked to European frameworks and research (Mustaparta et al., 2015).

Discussion

Our study of the spaces for multilingualism in national curricula in light of Ruizian language orientations allows for a greater understanding of how teachers in the classroom may (or may not) be afforded possibilities to promote social equity through recognition and support of their students' languages. The analyzed education policies create different spaces for multilingual education in their views of language as a problem, right, or resource. Hult and Hornberger (2016, p. 31, 38) maintain that awareness is necessary for the development of policies that will "establish or maintain equity" as well as further "societal multilingualism by expanding individuals' linguistic repertoires". Promoting multilingualism in the school may be a challenge for both policy makers and teachers in the classroom if the students' own diverse linguistic rights and resources are not recognized (de Jong, 2016). According to Rosén and Wedin (2015), if a teacher wishes to build upon a student's previous knowledge and experiences, then s/he needs to be open for that student's language and culture. Being able to use all available resources allows the student to participate fully in the community of learners, with the student's language understood and valued as legitimate for learning. While minority languages and other mother tongues are supported as language subjects in the Swedish national curricula, a recognition of the full use of linguistic resources for learning subject content would strengthen a view of language-as-resource, as seen more visibly in the Finnish curriculum.

In Finland, an explicit discourse on multilingual education exists, with an aim of integrating multilingual perspectives into the whole curriculum. As a "language-aware school", the implication is that all teachers are language teachers. These ambitions for a multilingual school are intertwined with supporting linguistic rights and social justice in the education. The call for all students to be seen as multilingual or to develop multilingualism, as is clear in the Finnish curriculum, is not evident in the Swedish context today. In Sweden, multilingualism is prevalent and in some schools nearly 100% of the students have mother tongues other than Swedish (Norberg Brorsson & Lainio, 2015). Despite this, our study reveals a tension between a monolingual norm and an official support for Mother tongue tuition in the Swedish curriculum. Languages are kept separate and there are no explicit directives encouraging the use of all linguistic resources across the curriculum (see also Rosén & Wedin, 2015). Although recent governmental plans for greater focus on language in teacher education in Sweden have been proposed (Koch, 2016), the current curriculum places great responsibility on teacher agency to implement classroom

practices which support the languages of all students. Swedish teachers may need to glean directives on supporting multilingualism from the space created in the focus on democracy and human rights. Without clear edicts encouraging a view of language-as-resource, teachers may rely on their own ideologies rather than official policy (see also Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

The long experience and the expertise Sweden has with mother tongue instruction, mother tongue study guidance, and Swedish as a second language are not plainly evident in the national curriculum. The Swedish National Agency does offer other documents and reports to support mother tongue education and the development of multilingualism, and the Swedish Language Act (2009) promotes and protects Swedish as well as the "language diversity in Sweden" (Section 2). Additionally, the Swedish Language Act stipulates that those with a mother tongue other than Swedish "are to be given the opportunity to develop and use their mother tongue" (Section 14). Yet the tension revealed in our study is similarly seen in the discrepancy between the national discourse on multilingualism (e.g. the Swedish Language Act) and the monolingual norm evident in the present analysis of the Swedish curriculum. For example, mother tongue study guidance in the Swedish context does ensure using linguistic resources in learning and affording possibilities to facilitate equal access to education (Reath Warren, 2017). However, study guidance is not officially present as a syllabus in the Swedish national curriculum. Study guidance is offered in Finland as well, despite the lack of a similar history of immigration in the Finnish context. The Finnish curriculum instead clearly presents more explicit and specific support for recognizing linguistic diversity as a right and a resource for *all* students. The issue in the Finnish case is if this strong curricular support reflects a bottom-up initiative based in the reality of the classroom or if it is solely based on the desires of policy-makers. The Finnish curriculum has only recently come into effect, and therefore a key question in future research concerns the capacities and practices of teachers and schools in the implementation of this curriculum and in the creation of a language-aware school.

Conclusion

This aim of this study was to explore how multilingualism is represented in the national curricula in Sweden and Finland, focusing particularly on spaces for the promotion of linguistic diversity and social justice, and identifying needs for changes within the Swedish and Finnish compulsory school and teacher education. Although neighboring countries with similar education values and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, analyses of policy in the two contexts reveal different frameworks and practices.

Despite the policy differences between the two countries in this study, Sweden and Finland are each meeting similar challenges with an increasing number of students with different languages and backgrounds. Education policy documents, including national curricula, are key to our possibilities as educators to promote social justice through linguistic diversity in the schools of today's global societies. How can we ensure that students' linguistic repertoires are not seen as problematic but instead as a resource in the school? Drawing from the results in this study, we argue that a crucial step toward reaching multilingual education that supports all students is in the clear recognition of the spaces present and the spaces needed in national curricula. This awareness allows for an understanding of how teachers can promote multilingual education, as well as what is needed in future policy-making.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was supported jointly by Stockholm University, Sweden, and the University of Helsinki, Finland.

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